



ISSUE IDENTIFICATION

This segment summarizes current planning issues that were identified by Southwest Valley residents.

Public Meetings

In September and October, 2001 Maricopa County hosted public workshops at the Buckeye Community Center, Rainbow Valley Elementary School, Gila Bend Senior Center, and Liberty Elementary School. Residents, business people, property owners, and government agency representatives were invited to attend the workshops and identify specific issues and concerns they felt should be addressed in the area plan. The following table lists issues identified by the participants.

Current Issues

Land Use

- Housing adjacent to Lewis Prison for prison staff.
- Determine location of sand and gravel facilities.
- Indicate the locations of future transmission line corridors and power plants on land use map.
- Focus development close to Buckeye and Gila Bend.
- Maintain rural character where possible between the two towns.
- Maintain existing vistas along State Route 85.
- Controlled growth.
- Provide for entry into Buckeye from State Route 85.
- Provide for non-residential uses of land from Interstate 10 to Baseline Road.
- Limit access to State Route 85 along entire length.
- Coordinate area plan with Town of Buckeye plans.
- Encourage agricultural uses between Buckeye and Gila Bend.
- Maximize public access and use to the Gila River.
- Preserve significant visual amenities.
- Conform to Town of Buckeye General Plan.
- Provide for land uses that are compatible if State Route 85 is designated as part of the CANAMEX route.

Transportation

- Need east/west access to State Route 85 other than El Paso Natural Gasline Road, preferably Riggs Road.
- Complete widening of State Route 85.
- Allow for bicycle path, lane, or shoulder along entire State Route 85 corridor.
- Limit urban uses to north and south ends of corridor only, in and adjacent to Buckeye and Gila Bend.



ISSUE IDENTIFICATION

Environment/Environmental Effects

- Protect endangered and sensitive species.
- Protect Indian ruins and artifacts and other cultural resources.
- Determine effects of additional county regulations on agriculture, i.e. air quality regulations, such as no burning allowed during the winter month.

Economic Development

- Promote major commercial corridor from Interstate 10 south to Buckeye, combined with light industrial and employment uses.
- Promote commercial uses along MC 85 into downtown Buckeye.
- Promote economic development that is compatible with the proposed CANAMEX route, such as trucking related facilities, hospitality facilities, etc.

Open Space

- Protect established trails, such as the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail and the Mormon Battalion Trail, in national monument and wilderness areas.
- Coordinate plans for protection of Buckeye Hills Recreation Area as a multi use recreation area.
- Protect Sonoran Desert National Monument.
- Allow for bicycle path/trail options along entire length, either in vicinity of the highway and/or the river.
- Preserve most of middle portion of corridor as open space.
- Support El Rio plan.

Water Resources

- Address water quality and quantity.

Issue Analysis

Land Use

Some residents in the planning area expressed a desire to maintain the rural character of the area that has existed for so long. Additionally, they would like to see urban development concentrated in and adjacent to the towns of Buckeye and Gila Bend. In the area between the two towns, they would like to maintain the visual amenities they are accustomed to seeing as they travel through the corridor. Most importantly, residents would like to see controlled growth that is accomplished through coordinated and cooperative efforts by public and private sectors.



Transportation

By far, the most important concern of residents in the planning area is that improvements be made to State Route 85 to increase safety and ease of travel along the highway. They feel that additional east/west access to the highway is also necessary. Those who live adjacent to unpaved roads would like to see Maricopa County expand paving of the roads, particularly to cut down on the amount of dust raised as off-road, recreational vehicles travel at high speeds along the shoulders. There was some interest in creating a bicycle path along the entire length of State Route 85 from Interstate 10 to Interstate 8.

Environment/Environmental Effects

Residents and stakeholders wish to protect and preserve endangered and sensitive species habitat within the planning area. Protection of historic ruins, artifacts, and other cultural resources is also a concern for a number of residents. Those involved in agriculture are concerned about additional air quality regulations imposed by the county and the state.

Economic Development

Stakeholders in the planning area desire commercial, industrial, and employment land uses along State Route 85 from Interstate 10 south to Buckeye and along MC 85 into downtown Buckeye. Additionally, stakeholders would like to see trucking related facilities and hospitality facilities along State Route 85, which has been proposed as a possible CANAMEX route.

Open Space

Stakeholders would like to see established and historic trails protected. Preservation and expansion of Buckeye Hills Recreation Area as a multi-use recreation area is a concern of residents and stakeholders. Support of the proposed El Rio project along the Gila River in the planning area is important, as is the preservation of the middle portion of the corridor as open space.

Water Resources

Of equal importance to residents and stakeholders is water quality and adequate water supplies. There is concern that rapid growth in the area may result in water shortages that may not be met with present supplies.



ISSUE IDENTIFICATION

This page intentionally left blank